

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. I don't think it's right for a broadcasting company to force a local station to air anything; such programming decisions should be up to the managers at the local level.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

It's also important that what is presented as fact has been thoroughly researched and documented. Citizens in a democracy need access to the truth, and we don't need more spin, conjecture and twisting of facts (or omission of facts) to fit ideology. That's what's supposed to separate us from totalitarian states, and we need to safeguard our media lest they become centrally-controlled mouthpieces for a certain few powerful people and corporations. Our democracy - our freedom - depends on factual, well-balanced reporting and an informed electorate.

I request that Sinclair be discouraged from going through with this plan, and if Sinclair persists, it should be censured. Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.